

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 02007 090923Z

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3412

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 2007

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, TC

SUBJ: ABU DHABI REQUEST FOR TOW MISSILES

REF: A. STATE 220533; B. ABU DHABI 1826

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

1. WHILE I DO NOT THINK WE OUGHT TO ALLOW ANY ABU DHABI DEADLINES TO INTERFERE WITH THOROUGH CONSIDERATION OF POLICY QUESTIONS RAISED FOR USG BY ABU DHABI REQUEST FOR TOW MISSILES, I WOULD EQUALLY HOPE THAT OUR RESPONSE WILL NOT BECOME SUBJECT TO UNNECESSARY DELAYS BECAUSE OF THE MANY OTHER PREOCCUPATIONS AT POLICY-MAKING LEVELS IN WASHINGTON. WHEN I TALKED WITH YOU AND JOE SISCO ON THIS SUBJECT DURING MY RECENT CONSULTATIONS, I FOUND BOTH OF YOU IN AGREEMENT WITH MY THESIS THAT, GIVEN PATTERN OF ARMS SALES ALREADY ESTABLISHED TO NEIGHBORING STATES, WE CANNOT OVER LONG TERM HOPE TO PURSUE OUR INTERESTS SUCCESSFULLY HERE WITHOUT BEING RESPONSIVE IN SOME REALISTIC MEASURE TO REQUESTS FOR U.S. ARMS. TOW'S EITHER HAVE BEEN OR SOON WILL BE SOLD TO DOZENS OF FOREIGN STATES, INCLUDING SEVERAL NEARBY. IT SIMPLY WILL NOT BE PLAUSIBLE OR WELL RECEIVED HERE FOR US TO ARGUE THAT BECAUSE ABU DHABI IS NOT PRESENTLY ENGAGED IN HOSTILITIES--AS IN OMAN--OR BECAUSE IT IS NOT (VAGUELY) THREATENED BY NEIGHBOR--AS IN KUWAIT--IT IS NOT ENTITLED TO BUY WEAPON WHICH IS FAST BECOMING STANDARD ITEM OF INVENTORY FOR MODERN, WELL-EQUIPPED ARMED FORCES ALMOST EVERYWHERE.

2. I THEREFORE HOPE POLICY QUESTION MENTIONED STATE REFTEL CAN BE
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ADDRESSED WITH REASONABLE DESPATCH AND THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE

POSITIVE RESPONSE TO ADDF REQUEST FOR EXPERT TO COME OUT TO DISCUSS ITS REQUIREMENTS WITH THEM. AS WE INDICATED IN OUR FIRST MESSAGE REPORTING REQUEST, ADDF IS TO LARGE EXTENT GROUPING ITS WAY ON THIS REQUEST AND WILL BE SINCERELY INTERESTED IN OUR FRANK ADVICE AS TO WHAT ITS REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE. WE BELIEVE ABU DHABI WILL ALSO BE UNDERSTANDING ABOUT ANY UNAVOIDABLE DELAYS WE MAY HAVE WITH RESPECT TO AVAILABILITY OF TOWS. THEY WILL UNDERSTAND USG HAS MANY HIGHER PRIORITIES AND I WOULD HAVE NO HESITATION IN EXPLAINING IT TO THEM IN THESE TERMS.

3. THERE IS ONE FURTHER IMPORTANT POINT WHICH I HOPE YOU AND THE UNDERSECRETARY WILL BEAR IN MIND IN REACHING DECISION ON THIS REQUEST. REQUEST COMES IN IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF EGYPT/ISRAEL AGREEMENT. COINCIDENCE OF TIMING IS IN NO WAY ACCIDENTAL. IT IS DECISION WHICH WE KNOW COMES FROM SHAIKH ZAYID HIMSELF, AND IS IN EFFECT NOT MERELY REQUEST FOR GIVEN PIECE OF EQUIPMENT, BUT INVITATION TO THE US TO ESTABLISH WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH UAE DEFENSE FORCES. I AM CONFIDENT ZAYID SEES THIS AS CONCRETE MANIFESTATION IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP OF STEADILY IMPROVING STATUS OF U.S. IN ARAB WORLD AS RESULT OF SUCCESSFUL U.S. ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT FURTHER STATE OF ARAB-ISRAEL AGREEMENT. IT WILL ALSO BE SIGNAL, BOTH INTERNALLY AND TO OUTSIDERS, OF HIS SUPPORT FOR EGYPTIAN AND U.S. STRATEGY IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF DIVIDED ARAB COUNSEL, EVIDENCE OF WHICH WE ALSO HAVE FROM MY RECENT CONVERSATION WITH ZAYID. FROM POINT OF VIEW OF THIS BROADER POLITICAL CONTEXT AS WELL, THEN, I BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO BE AS RESPONSIVE AS WE CAN TO THIS FIRST ABU DHABI REQUEST FOR COOPERATION IN MILITARY SUPPLY FIELD WITH THE U.S.

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